

# On the Esthetic States of the Mind

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# On the Esthetic States of the Mind

Harry B. Lee\*

IN PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS concerning some of the problems of sublimation,<sup>1</sup> I have examined our knowledge of the mental processes concerned in the creation of art<sup>2</sup> and have advanced a theory to explain the occurrence of creativeness in original artists whom I have observed clinically over a long period of time. I turn now to explore the problem of the appreciation of art and also to discuss further the subject of creativeness.

The mental processes in making and in appreciating have traditionally been assumed to be identical, so that one is always explained in terms of the assumptions about the other, even though this presumed identity has never been demonstrated.<sup>3</sup> One reason for now considering the two activities together is to present them in a comparative way since my findings in regard to the psychological roots of these experiences reveal their relationship to be a kinship only of similarity, not of identity.

Another reason is to refute the further common assumption that there is but one kind of mental process for the making of art and but one kind for the appreciating of art. My findings indicate (1) that there are different kinds of mental processes and of esthetical orientation leading to the several varieties of creativeness and productiveness and to the several varieties of appreciation; and (2) that, among all of these various esthetic states of the mind, the differences as well as the similarities are capable of explanation by something more objective than the philosopher's assumptions about art which have always been accepted as esthetic authority.

The reasonable aim of a scientific approach to the problems of esthetics should be to observe artistic experience itself, as a whole, for the "spiritual" experience which it is. This is not to be achieved by studying whatever mental activity is embalmed in the work of art or by examining the isolated nonemotional and conscious elements of this experience, but by observing the mental processes which occur during the esthetic activities of creating and appreciating. The psychoanalytic method of observing our mental processes, though it deals only with clinical psychological material furnished by those who seek treatment for an illness of the emotions, is the almost ideal way

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<sup>1</sup> This is the fourth of a series of publications about problems of sublimation by the present writer: (1) Poetry Production as a Supplemental Emergency Defense against Anxiety. *Psychoanalytic Quart.* (1938) 7:232-242. (2) A Critique of the Theory of Sublimation. *PSYCHIATRY* (1939) 2:239-270. (3) A Theory Concerning Free Invention in the Creative Arts. *PSYCHIATRY* (1940) 3:229-293. The fifth, Concerning the Cultural Lag in Aesthetics, is being published currently in the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*.

<sup>2</sup> I shall use the term art collectively for all inventions of the creative imagination. This would include painting, sculpture, literature, music, scientific discovery, and invention.

<sup>3</sup> A typical example is the following quotation from Frank J. Mather, Jr., *Concerning Beauty*; Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1935; p. 57: "... appreciative activity significantly parallels the creative activity of the artist. It is grounded in an habitual will to understand, entirely analogous to the artist's habitual and generalized will to make."

for accomplishing this aim. Yet psychoanalysts have neglected this approach to the problems of art, substituting for it what has been called "psychoanalysis for art's sake," a psychoanalytic variety of art criticism consisting of speculation about works of art and the lives of artists.

I have tried to avoid this error by going to the living artist, with an interest in studying his various esthetic moods according to the psychoanalytic method of observation. My clinical findings by this method reveal that there are different varieties of creative and productive experience among artists, due to qualitative and quantitative differences in their unconscious mental processes; that the work of artists who produce art which is not creative, as well as the work produced by the creative artist in the interim between his creative periods, stems from a different mental process than that which results in true creativeness; further, that the varieties of art appreciation, all of which may even occur on different occasions in the same person in the presence of the same work of art, are due to a variety of mental processes which differ in kind and degree; and, finally, that in a creative person, these differences determine not only the variety of appreciation that he will be capable of at a given time, but also whether his experience just then will be that of appreciating or creating.

*My thesis is that the various esthetic states of the mind occur in particular kinds of personalities in order to relieve acute psychological emergencies due to the activation of destructive rage which is not being efficiently repressed; and that quantitative differences in the emotional tensions arising from guilt over destructive rage determine in the same person (1) whether defense occurs by making or by appreciating and (2) the variety of making or of appreciating.*

#### THE MENTAL PROCESSES OF CREATIVENESS IN THE CREATIVE ARTIST

I have elsewhere described the unique features of the artist's mind and the manner in which these deal with the outside world of people and things, and I have

explained why and how the artist creates.<sup>4</sup> Because of his excessive self-regarding need, the need to relate himself in a special way to women, the ease with which his destructive rage is aroused upon the thwarting of these needs, and his disposition to employ partial regression in defense of the resultant anxiety, the artist is liable to fall ill occasionally with a neurotic depression. The true nature of his depression as a mental illness and a suffering is so generally unrecognized that it is, in fact, celebrated in our lore as the artist's "sweet melancholy."

The artist's depression is only the acute worsening of a chronic maladjustment to human relationships, evident in his traditional inner discord, vanity, isolation, aloofness, and "temperament." It results from his turning against himself, at the prompting of conscience, of the same destructive rage as he had directed at another. This manifests itself in an unconscious need to suffer and in the withdrawal from human ties and other objects of a large share of his interest, which he then diverts to the tasks of self-punishment and self-healing. He emerges from his illness upon achieving a cycle of mental tasks that include the unconscious psychic labors of inspiration and creation; and these labors, through restoring in him the functions of pity and love, restore inner harmony among the institutions of his mind, as well as gratify his excessive need for self-esteem and renew his previous interest in human ties.

It is only after suffering and atonement have liquidated guilt sufficiently that the depressed artist succeeds in achieving a concept of pity and love, popularly called an inspired vision, which celebrates in fancy the restitution of the destroyed, or damaged, person. And it is this resumed exercise of pity as evidence of reform that restores to him a share of the love and approval withdrawn by the maternal side of conscience, better known as the Muse.

<sup>4</sup> Harry B. Lee, A Theory Concerning Free Creation in the Inventive Arts. *PSYCHIATRY* (1940) 3:229-293; p. 261.



His next mental task is to come to terms with his environment in a way which will permit him to reinvest human relationships with fuller interest. The artist proceeds with this task by exteriorizing his inspired concept. In successive stages he employs it in order to channel back into human ties the energy now freed from the primary task of liquidating guilt by self-punishment. His first step is to animate something lifeless. He negotiates this reprogressive advance by taking a small sample of the inanimate environment—formless dead matter—and contemplating it with creative intent. That is, he relates himself to it not only in nondestructive ways, but also with such abundant esthetic meanings of restitution and of pity and love as will transmute it with this re-formed image of himself and restore to him a still larger share of love and approval from the maternal representative in conscience. Thus he animates into a thing of formal beauty the symbol of what in fancy he had destroyed during his rage—animates it into a vessel of esthetic significance which now stands to conscience as testimony that he has redeemed himself, that he is no longer destructive, that pity and love have been restored, and that, consequently, he is again truly lovable. It is the restoration of the love and approval of his conscience that results in that pleasure which creative artists call spiritual in the sense of being at one with themselves and with their work.

Now, with harmony achieved among the institutions of his mind and with pity, love, and excessive self-regard all restored, the artist feels sanctioned to emerge from the seclusion into which he was forced by the neurotic depression visited upon him by conscience. He feels sanctioned now to relate himself to the animate; and he directs an increasing share of interest to human beings, including the one whom he had wished to destroy when he cast pity aside.

The creation of art is one of the last steps in a cycle which frees the artist from a mobile depression. But the artist has not changed himself in any fundamental way by the exercise of his spirit

through creating. His fundamental disposition persists—his exaggerated need for self-esteem, the peculiar importance of the maternal representative in his conscience, the easy arousal of his rage, and his employment of partial regression as defense. These qualities leave him as incapable as ever of living with others on reasonable terms. Sooner or later, when his unusual demands for the gratification of self-esteem or for reassurance are sufficiently thwarted, he will again cast pity aside and react with destructive rage, and will again need to deal with the resulting mass of anxiety by partial regression. Caught once more in the grip of a mobile depression, he will deliver himself from it eventually by repeating his cycle of suffering, contemplative appreciation, inspiration, creation, and reclamation of the same more or less harmonious but always unstable human ties.

The creative work of art, therefore, is not really undertaken as an end in itself. It is not simply the overflow of a generous nature, or the artist's special reaction to natural beauty, or his wish to communicate a message, or the consciously directed process that estheticians have described. Neither is it the sublimation of nonrepressed pre-genital sexual wishes that Freud claimed it to be. Instead, the created work is something made to bridge the way back to mental health from the despondency into which the artist's destructive rage has plunged him. The creative artist is delivered to his genius *only at this time*; this is why he does not do creative work at all times, and why he cannot do creative work at will. He must await the bid of his Muse; and her bid comes only when he is out of favor with her, depressed. The artist creates in answer to an urgent unconscious need to relieve his suffering by extricating himself from a mobile depression brought on by the expression of unreasonable destructive rage. He answers this need with creativeness whose significance is restitutive and redemptive. Incidental to the special way in which his mental organization permits him to answer this need, he achieves what is, to him, the highest of all rewards, the ecstatic delight of cre-

ation. In fine, it is the recapture of extensive at-one-ness and of that very deep gratification of self-esteem which attends a reconciliation with the psychic representative of his mother in conscience and which repeats in spiritual quality and intensity his childhood reconciliatory experience of her love and approval when he felt guilty toward her.

#### THE ARTIST'S VISION WHEN HE IS CREATIVE

According to popular belief, the artist creates because he is more easily moved than the rest of us by "beauty" in persons and in nature and because his inborn talent enables him to communicate his gifted perceptions to the senses and intellects of others. There are artists whom the popular concept fits. They are the excellent craftsmen who seek "beauty" ready-made and who can transcribe likeness admirably enough. But they are not creative artists.

The truly creative artist is not a man who functions merely as the skillful secretary of his senses or of his intuitions, to please others. He is, rather, a man who is convalescing from a neurotic depression brought on by the effects of having hated too much. Thus his work is an end in itself only in a certain sense; its essential motive is its salutary function for his mental health. In the exciting work of creating, the artist gives the least or none of his thought to the effect that his work will have upon others or to the values that they will choose to find in it, since his entire mental orientation in creating is not toward communicating a message to other persons but toward communicating an intention to his intrapsychic Muse.

The artist's vision during creation is not optical, but spiritual, because his reality then is essentially an inward and spiritual one. During his depressive illness and convalescence a large share of interest has been turned inward, withdrawn from people and things, and his mind's eye is much more on the inner Muse than on the sensuously perceived outer world. In the course of healing himself, he takes the step of inventing a

concept—which we call inspired because it is unconsciously propelled and is by custom presumed to be the gift of God—a concept which comprehends forms in accordance with an urgent unconscious need to demonstrate to the Muse, through the restitutive meanings of these forms, his atonement and his intention to reform the renounced function of pity. He needs to heal himself further, now in a contemplatively creative fantasy, and soon in a contemplatively creative making, by informing this inner vision with ever-increasing esthetic significance in order to come to even better terms with conscience, then with inanimate material, and later with his human environment. The artist answers these unconscious needs for restitution with such expression of pity and love as only his creative mood permits him to embody in the formal organization of the work and in his handling of the material. As he translates his inner vision of the ideal into the content of the work, he enhances its esthetic significance by whatever potentialities for formal organization his medium offers; in doing this he expresses in terms of such light, shadow, line, shapes, and color as are not seen in nature, and as were never before related to each other in just this novel way, his contemplative reaction to himself, and then to the things and persons he chooses to fancy, to recall, or to perceive. Thus creative imagination, serving the Muse from emotional necessity, selects and transforms the perceived and the remembered according to unconscious needs to express spiritual meanings inventively in the language we call formal beauty.

In fact, at these times, when a large share of interest has been subtracted from the senses which report the environment, he is less able to direct his thinking or to observe the outside sensuous world of appearance, even when he attempts to force himself to do so, than to attend to the unconscious outpouring of his inner vision. The need to invest the perceived model with a spiritualized conception of himself and a symbolic restitution of the person he wished to destroy, and to do so quickly with the mass of energy re-



leased by the achievement of inspiration, are, in creative moments, matters which command the greatest share of his interest. The inspired concept does not derive from, but employs, the remembrance or the perception of natural objects; when the artist is in his truly creative mood, he is not particularly interested in producing mere likeness. In creating, he feels compelled to express his restitutive mood through the esthetic meanings of his creative thinking and making; and since the essence of these meanings lies in his inventive dealing with forms, his aim is not likeness and he does not actually require a model, a scene, or even a sketch. If he employs these, he uses them only as a point of departure. The artist's creative need is not to produce for others some pleasing shapes, colors, or sounds, but primarily to create a thing with personal spiritual significance, for the judgment of himself by himself, that is, by his conscience. If he succeeds in this, it is because he has informed the work with testimonies of his reform and of his delight in being rematriated. Then it is that he feels with utter conviction that the work is "right," no matter what the judgment of others.

Thus subject matter as one of the elements which can be integrated formally in the context of a work furnishes a means beyond organic structure for the expression of spiritual meanings. Subject matter certainly contains important symbolic meanings whose associational significance for the artist is private to himself; yet, at the time of creating, subject matter as subject matter contains much less of interest to his mood than the flooding spirituality which resides in the esthetic significance of the work—restitutive meanings which he values the most because they are acceptable to conscience as testimony that, pity and love being restored, he is no longer destructive to others. The primary purpose of the artist is to create within the work of art spiritual values *for himself* in order that these may recapture the love and approval of conscience and so permit him to come to terms again with his human environment; his fundamental motive is

self-healing, and not the transmission of ideas or emotional experience beyond himself.

I submit, then, that it is relatively unimportant to the depressed and creating artist whether he pictures himself as his spiritually imaginative reaction to a memory, a landscape, an arrangement of vegetables, a dead rabbit, or a Madonna, provided that these spiritually imaginative reactions lend themselves to his need to translate into a piece of the material world, with creative art, the demonstration of his reform; and that the spectators who appraise the artist's creative works in terms of technique and subject matter cannot comprehend its true inner meaning for the artist or share with him in the intrinsic spiritual values embodied in his personally significant invention of the ideal.

#### THE MENTAL PROCESSES IN CERTAIN VARIETIES OF ART APPRECIATION

If one studies in some detail the dynamic context in which ideas concerning the appreciation of art occur in the free associations of patients observed psychoanalytically, it becomes apparent that they are most frequently expressed by the narcissistic personalities whom we classify as neurotic characters. The kinds of artistic interest expressed can readily be categorized as (1) casual or (2) emergency experience of the esthetic, according to the following dominant features: the degree of emotional expressiveness in the context of ideas which contains a reference to art; the compulsive quality of the need to express an interest in art; the kind of artistic experience expressed, that is, whether it is appreciative or creative; the dominant character of the interest described, that is, whether it is chiefly intellectual or chiefly contemplative; and the remoteness or recency of the experience to which it refers—whether it occurs as passing comment or is of longer duration, tending to be repeated and elaborated at some length.

The patient in whom I have found the first of these classes of interest occurring most often is a narcissistic character

whose dominant point of fixation is at the early genital stage, but which is rendered precarious by very prominent fixations at earlier stages of libidinal organization, particularly at the late anal-sadistic stage. He could be classified as a severely neurotic character of hysterical type. During the interviews his state of mind is usually one of outward composure, and his stream of talk flows on in a leisurely, apparently self-contained, and always self-regarding manner. His associations tend to be intellectualized, and the ideas with artistic interest which these contain are not very expressive of emotion; they are mostly chatter in which ideas are more or less self-consciously directed and are connected chiefly by links of an intellectually logical order rather than by the unconscious emotional links which characterize true free association. The artistic experience reported is relatively static from being most often remote in time rather than revealing a current need for esthetic satisfaction, and it is frequently embroidered upon the stream of talk for the purpose of self-adornment. Usually it recalls a casual interest in a work of art at some past time for the purpose of enlarging the subject's intellectual experience and prestige or for answering his occasional need of an exquisite sense of external order. These intellectually linked and usually self-aggrandizing references to art achieve for this patient some satisfaction of the chronic unconscious need to maintain an inflated self-esteem. It is this class of ideas, among which artistic interest with these qualities occurs, that I have categorized as a series of associations with *casual reference to art*.

The patient in whose stream of associations the other class of interest in art occurs is also a narcissistic character whose dominant point of fixation at the early genital stage is rendered precarious by the retention of strong fixations at earlier stages of libidinal organization; but he differs from the patient just described in having retained very prominent fixations at both the late anal-sadistic and oral-sadistic stages. He, also, would be classified as a neurotic character of hysterical type, but with a notable ad-

mixture of compulsive, phobic, and mild depressive symptoms. His references to art concern more the vivid experience of a work of art appreciated for its esthetic meanings, rather than ideas about himself in terms of art; and they occur under some compulsion for current or very early satisfaction. The patient in whom they occur is attempting to relieve an increased degree of emotional tension with his present interest in art; and he experiences visible relief from anxiety in the expression of ideas which avow his participation in esthetic values. I shall call the ideas with artistic interest expressed by a patient of this type a series of associations with *emergency experience of the esthetic*.

Both of these types of esthetic experience gratify a chronic and marked self-regarding need; but the emergency experience gratifies in addition certain urgent needs that are emotional in kind, rather than intellectual or sensory. In contrast with the casual reference to art, it occurs only in a patient who is in a condition of acutely increased anxiety and whose experience of art is a current one. It expresses itself among a stream of free associations with high emotional coloring, associations whose links are chiefly unconscious and of an emotionally logical order. The artistic interest occurring in this context is a dynamic one; it elbows its way into expression as a pressing inner need to experience spiritual values in the culturally valued types of the ideal which are to be found in art; and it manifests itself as appreciation that participates in the esthetic significance of an art object, instead of the dominantly intellectual appreciating experience which employs casual reference to works of art in a static, self-decorative, and self-aggrandizing manner. It is, in brief, an urgent and unconscious need to employ during the psychoanalytic interview a transitory form of the personal and deeply absorbing spiritual experience of art which is called contemplative, the most extensive variety of which is described by those capable of it as a mystical union with the work of art.

Having roughly differentiated the two classes, I shall describe more definitively



the mental processes which require the employment of emergency appreciating in the course of free association. In day-to-day observations the psychoanalyst notes the attempts of patients to deal with moderate increases of emotional tension and their characteristic disposition to seek relief from this pain by employing regularly certain preferred and personally significant types of defense against anxiety. If one is alert to these instances of increased tension in the type of personality described, he will find that the patient who employs emergency experience of the esthetic does so when he is in a condition of such greatly increased emotional tension that the customary means of defense are being sorely taxed. In order to liquidate the acute excess of tension, he musters in an emergency supplemental defense against anxiety in the contemplative appreciation of art, and the compulsive use of this defense affords a visible relief of the tension. The factor determining the need to defend himself just then with contemplation in the realm of art is a quantitative one, consisting in the acute increase of certain anxieties which are generally present in this type of personality.

The sources of the anxieties involved usually consist in some mixture of an unconscious need for punishment, a dread of losing the love and approval of the maternal representative in conscience, and an unconscious fear that one's genitals are damaged. Closer examination reveals that these tensions result from the patient's destructive rage towards some person who has interfered with his techniques for exploiting persons in order to gratify excessive self-regarding demands or who thwarts his excessive demands for a maternal kind of love and approval. The impulse to destroy is regarded indiscriminately in the unconscious of the patient as if it had been an attack directed ultimately at his mother. In his unconscious, the fancied damage to the mother's generative organs, breasts, fetus, or child, or to the impregnating organs of her mate are all construed as damage to the reproductive function of the mother; accordingly, guilt and the dread of losing

love are felt chiefly toward the maternal representative in conscience. An acute increase in these anxieties may issue also from causes other than a thwarting that is unreasonably conceived as sufficient provocation to destroy or damage; for example, from sexual activity, and in particular from masturbation, perverse sexual behavior, intercourse without love, or being party to an abortion, when these sexual acts express, with or without its recognition in consciousness, the unconscious wish to destroy or damage. In a patient of this type an acute increase of these tensions can result also from the technical error of an inexperienced therapist who, with premature or badly presented interpretation of an unconscious hatred of the mother or of a sibling in relation to the mother's reproductive function, disturbs too much the efficient repression of the complex containing these destructive impulses.

When tensions of the kinds described are so acutely increased in quantity as to constitute an emergency, the patient requires additional defense (1) in order to supplement the taxed forces of repression so that they will contain the activated destructive impulse and (2) in order to liquidate most effectively the excess of tensions resulting from his destructive tendency. He needs to achieve these at once, and in no uncertain way. Therefore, he seeks quick and certain relief by personifying in the psychoanalyst the maternal representative in his conscience and then wooing her as such. He craves reassurance against any further withdrawal of love and approval by the maternal side of conscience, and sues for their restoration in full through an esthetic state of mind whose intention is restitutive; he expresses to the psychoanalyst this orientation of mind through his interest in art. In this kind of emergency the quick mustering in of a contemplative appreciation of art is most effective as defense because it serves also to liquidate the excess of the other tensions which result from the same guilt. It is not only a reactive substitute-formation freighted with creative (restitutive) meaning that is precisely the opposite of

destructiveness; it is also the transference repetition of a guilty child's technique for reclaiming mother's love and approval by reaffirming their mutual identification in the meanings of something artistic, of something whole, undamaged, animated, and ideal; and it affords satisfaction of a spiritual kind because it is an evidence of restored pity and love. With this intuitive mode of appreciating art, conscience is offered testimony of one's reform, of one's capacity for better ways of life, and of one's return to love-worthiness. It is at once a denial of destructiveness and a mode of identifying oneself with the ideals of one's mother. Its intention is to bear witness that, far from being a destructive person, one has pity for others and, consequently, does not actually deserve withdrawal of love and approval by her who taught him to pity and to love and who applauded his exercise of these functions.

Accordingly, in order to cancel out at once, and unerringly, the painful tensions resulting from guilt over a destructive impulse which has almost escaped from repression prior to or during a psychoanalytic interview, and which is still struggling to escape, the patient unconsciously orients perception or memory to invest an object of artistic interest with his attention in order to apprehend, and to avow to a representative of his mother, an intuitive experience of its esthetic meanings. Frequently he will direct his attention to some object of artistic value in the psychoanalyst's office which he had often before noticed but which, until now, there had been no need to employ contemplatively; or he will recall with vivid interest an artistic object which had special esthetic value for one of his parents or for the person in his current life against whom he has directed the impulse to destroy or damage. He may bring out of the past the memory of a particularly moving experience of formal beauty or describe, in re-creative mood, some past creative activity of his own. And he amplifies the same defense task whenever his associations take on a rich flavor of ideas which have esthetic reference, such as the use of poetical language, classical

phrases, archaic forms of speech, and quotations from his Latin.

I shall now classify some of the common forms of emergency-appreciating experience of the esthetic, with key numbers so that their occurrence may be referred to conveniently in the examples of clinical material which I shall quote presently. The patient's anxiety-driven and contemplative mode of absorption, even though transitory, is as significant as his unconscious needs to experience particularly the realm of the esthetic in the emotional context that I have described.

*A. Emergency appreciating experience of the esthetic which occurs during the psychoanalytic interview, and is not related to dreams:*

(A1) The patient brings an art object as a gift or reports having just given one to someone else. More often, he quotes poetry, the compelling and sharp remembrance of which had flashed into his mind on the way to the interview or now during the interview. He may quote original poetry he had once composed intuitively.

(A2) The patient reports the compulsive purchase for himself of some artistic object, or even of art materials which he does not know how to use but plans to; or he reports that he had yielded to a compulsion to attend a concert that day or to visit an art museum at once and that this experience had proved to be one of rapt appreciation unusual for him; that he had joined a sketch class today or a folk-dancing or ballet group; or he reports a strong impulse to gratify the same unconscious needs in some bizarre but personally significant manner, for example, to purchase an unusual quantity of musical or dramatic recordings, to photograph an expression of peace and contentment on the face of a beautiful woman, or to have a portrait of himself made for his mother "in order to show myself in a good light."

(A3) The patient "discovers" and makes elaborate appreciating reference to some art object in the office of the psychoanalyst; or he repeats by recall



some degree of the impressive experience of esthetic delight he once had in a work of art; sometimes he will recall the same of an art object which was especially valued by his parents.

(A4) The patient reports that, suddenly, there passes before his eyes a series of conventionalized beautiful landscapes; that he perceives upon the wall or in the grain of the door a formal design which his imagination has invented and composed there.

(A5) The patient introduces and sustains among his associations an esthetic flavor with archaisms, Latin words and phrases, metaphor, and quotations from the Bible or from classical literature. When this occurs in response to the psychoanalyst's request to free-associate to a particular idea (one not referring to art) which the patient had mentioned, the esthetic flavor is found to be the cover for a poorly repressed destructive impulse.

(A6) Before reporting sexual activity over which he feels particularly guilty because it had vented an unconscious destructive impulse and had resulted in an acute increase of the tensions described under B4 (see below), the patient will often preface and/or follow his confession with defense by elaborate 'appreciating experiences of the esthetic.

(A7) The patient feels the urge to quote poetry he had once memorized, which now returns to him with unusual ease and vividness, or reports that he was obsessed with the remembrance of certain poetic lines on his way to the interview; or he reports being puzzled over his present obsession with the memory of a particular painting or sculpture or of being haunted by a certain musical passage. This permits him to contain for a while some of the excess tensions arising from poorly repressed destructive impulses or from destructive impulses which have entered consciousness thinly disguised.

*B. Emergency appreciating reference to the esthetic that occurs in relation to the material of dreams:*

(B1) The patient avows a current ap-

preciation of art as prologue to his narration of a dream that expresses destructiveness; it is generally a dream of destruction directed at some member of the mother's child-bearing function. Often, the telling of the dream itself will be preceded by remarks with additional esthetic reference, such as: "I had an elusive dream last night, elusive as a vagrant zephyr. Don't you think I am getting poetic?" . . . "It might have been a painting I was looking at as well as a dream." . . . "All the scenes in this dream were like the pictures I used to look at in our Bible." . . . "This dream was more like the picture of a religious ceremony and it felt like some need for people to do penance as in olden days." After quoting some poetry, he may report a dream of destructiveness that he now first remembers having dreamed.

(B2) The patient reports a dream of destructiveness, the content of which makes significant references to the esthetic, such as to the characters in celebrated masterpieces, musical instruments or art materials, the artistic possessions and avocations of his parents, the Bible, lines of poetry, archaic or poetic diction, and classical or Biblical phrases, scenes, and characters; or he dwells on his conviction that the dream contained an experience of art more beautiful than any in waking life, which he wishes he had the craftsmanship to reproduce.

(B3) The patient elaborates upon the ecstasy experienced in a rapturously "beautiful dream" he had had the night before, the beauty of which still holds him enthralled. Usually it is a dream of a natural scene, "unreally beautiful" in its color and forms—"a dream in vivid technicolor." The patient refers to it with much feeling, as beauty of an unearthly, supernatural, blissful kind that he craves to experience again. Sometimes the scene in the dream is recalled to have derived from religious pictures or from illustrations in the books with which he was familiar in childhood. There is little or no action in such dreams, whose function is to employ esthetic values as defense. They mask great terror due to destructiveness.



(B4) Patients reporting dreams following masturbation are particularly likely to use emergency appreciating experience of the esthetic as defense, before or after narrating the dream. These are employed to resolve an unconscious need for punishment over the destructive meaning of masturbation, unconscious fear of the withdrawal of love and approval from conscience, and need for reassurance against the unconscious fear (arising from hostile identification) that one's genitals have been damaged.

(B5) The patient interrupts his telling of, or his free association to, a dream of destructiveness in order to mend then and there his defenses against accumulating anxieties by recalling the vivid experience of a work of art or by quoting poetry, proverbs, and the Bible; or he may offer any of the ideas referring to the esthetic already mentioned in A1, A2, A4, and A7.

(B6) The patient may respond immediately with an experience of the esthetic upon being given an interpretation of a dream concerning destructive impulses.

(B7) The patient reports two dreams from the same night. The first is a dream of destructiveness. The second concerns a contemplative interest in art.

Emergency-appreciating experience of the esthetic occurs very frequently in artist patients during the interim between their neurotic depressions, that is, outside their truly creative periods. I shall not quote examples of these, however, since I wish to demonstrate the occurrence of this experience in *non-artists*; therefore, the following examples are quoted from the material of patients who are not artists or the children or mates of artists. Each example is annotated with key numbers corresponding to the cases just enumerated.

A woman reported the following dream: "I was walking along and saw a girl standing in a bathhouse which had one side missing. She looked like a girl in one of Gauguin's pictures (B2). I was writing a gossip column and was going to write something about this girl. Her name was something like Audubon (B2) and I asked her how to spell it. Then I went over to a desk like an artist's

drawing board (B2) and wrote something about her. Next to this woodshed was a Catholic church and lots of girls were going from the woodshed to the church." Later, she told that on her way to my office she had yielded to an overpowering impulse to buy water colors and art paper with the idea that she might like to use them some day (A2). Finally, she confessed having masturbated before she had the dream (B4).

A man defended his fear of being found out about his destructive impulses towards his sister, who is a cellist, in the following dream: "There were older men around and I went into another room. There had been a murder there and I found a clue. It was a broken cello string (B2) from which the wind had blown a piece of paper out of the window. Another man and I followed the clue." He associated, spontaneously, "G string" with the cello. Towards the end of the next interview he remembered the following dream: "I was sitting on a box. There was a squirrel on the floor. In the distance there was a leopard. The squirrel kept pushing at me, and I kept pushing it back because I was afraid of it. I wondered, Wasn't the leopard going to attack the squirrel? Then I ran downstairs to get a rifle to shoot the squirrel with." He had great difficulty in free-associating to this dream, and even in speaking about anything. At the following interview he reported that on the preceding day, and immediately upon leaving my office, he had recalled suddenly something of which he had not thought for years, and which he believed might pertain to me: that when he was a pupil in grammar school, and about eight years of age, a teacher who was fond of him had made a picture of a leopard which she gave to him (B5). It proved later that the leopard pertained to the patient's resistance to treatment.

A patient reported that she awoke obsessed with a Wagnerian musical theme and felt compelled to play repeatedly Wagner's *Fire Music* (B4). When asked to free-associate to this music, she remembered, after some blocking, a repressed dream of the night before in which she ran from a building where a fierce fire raged, leaving her elderly parents in it.

A man related the following dream: "I was sitting in a room talking over with Mr. X some plans for remodelling my building. Mr. X is a very cruel man in his criticisms, thoughtless and tactless. We went down the street to look at the old building it was to replace. Somehow, I was informed that the man I was with had killed someone. As I was walking down the street with him I made some Biblical remark like 'Thou sayest' with reference to the murder, and I remem-

ber saying that twice (B2)." Later in the interview, when the patient was told that the dream concerned some repressed killing rage of his own which he had projected to me, who was helping him put his house in order, he replied, "Even the poet Dante (B6), going through the inferno needed the guidance of a virgin," and then he asked whether a person could be considered cruel who, like himself, neglected his dear friends because of his concentration on his work and utter devotion to it.

A man, when asked to free-associate to his comment that his wife's breasts had become repulsive, replied: "'Remember the wife of thy youth (A5).' Maybe her breasts are changing because of pregnancy. Maybe she is pregnant and hasn't told me. I think of the painting 'Annunciation' at the Art Institute (A3). A play I read, *Tidings Brought to Mary* (A3). Once while my wife was still nursing one of our babies I stimulated her breasts and milk came out. That was terrible, like the admonition in Mosaic law 'Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk' (A5). I can't find my diary. I used to put good stuff in it, and designated masturbation by five vertical lines and one horizontal line, and that prison bars would be for me if I continued to masturbate." The patient went on to confess having masturbated the night before (B4).

A lawyer whose mother is a connoisseur and collector of rare china reported a dream which had occurred the day before, his birthday: "Mother was having tea, and had her best cups and saucers out (B2). I knocked two of them onto the floor and broke them. They were irreplaceable. She scratched her arm till it was raw, then used the blood to glue them together, and said: 'Well that will be all right.' At the same time, I thought: Well, I will go out now and have my picture taken for her." When he was asked to associate to breaking the saucers he told that at twelve years of age, when he was in an art class at school (B5), his brother had marked up a lot of his drawings to destroy them. In the next interview, when he was asked whether he did not believe that having his photograph taken could be in the nature of a restitution to his mother, he replied that it was only to show her that he did not break the dishes maliciously: "It was not a restitution because the dishes, being heirlooms, were irreplaceable." . . . "Yesterday when I left here I had my photograph taken (A2). Mother asked me for one some time ago. But before I went I had an uncontrollable impulse to go to the law library to look up the bastardy laws, which I did although I had no real reason to do so. Was this something against my mother too?"

Upon being told that he was not free-associating, a patient blurted out: "If I came out with my aggressions I would be ostracized." He was reminded that he had once stated that he had, in effect, ostracized himself, and he replied: "The way I am now I am able to establish a formal *modus vivendi* with people (A7). If I made people hate me openly I couldn't have the relationship of *formal* civility I have now. I just thought of my cousin Tom. He hates me openly. Oh, that reminds me of some dream I had last night." The patient then related a dream of violent destructiveness directed at his twin sister.

A woman failed to appear for two interviews "because of abdominal pain," but really because she did not want to confess having masturbated. She stated that immediately after telephoning the day before to say that she would be unable to come to the interview, she returned to sleep and dreamed: "Our family doctor had come into my bedroom, an L shaped affair. Before he came in, I was talking with my mother, and she said I could put my bed into the alcove where the baby grand piano stands (B2). I said I could paint it yellow (B2). Then there came in a messy girl with whom I used to play in the country and the doctor was distressed as if he knew I was peculiar." The patient related that before coming to the present interview she had visited the Art Institute on impulse, and that she had been most deeply moved by Monet's *Gardens of Gervigny* (A2). Later in the interview, after having confessed the masturbation, she stated: "I think of the abandon in the Boticelli picture in my bedroom (B5). These days I seem to wear all my jewelry. Don't you think that I wanted to move my bed in the dream in order to hide my guilt since I masturbated in that bed the day before I had the dream?"

A man reported the following dream: "Somehow, I had fashioned a chair, no, I hadn't fashioned a chair, but had gotten a chair and cut in (B1) back of it a star, a five-pointed star (B2). I had placed the chair so that a tremendous lot of light focused on that star and so that people could see it, although there weren't many people there. I was exhibiting it for some reason or another. Maybe that represents divine knowledge." The chair was like a dining-room chair he had destroyed the year before while in a rage at his wife. It was also like one he remembers in his parents' home as a child. The patient experienced great difficulty in free-associating to this dream, and there recurred several times in very moving form the memory of lying on a davenport at eleven years of age in great mental torment over something he cannot now remember, and "then getting up suddenly with the good feeling that all my sins were forgiven."



The following is the verbatim report of part of an interview with a woman patient: "I awoke feeling as if I had been through lots of temper tantrums, and I could not see why I felt so upset. I had dreamed that I was in a boat on a lake and saw someone setting fire to forests. I thought it would not be quite as bad as usual forest fires because the forest was kind of messy and cut-over so that it did not matter anyway. Then I was turning over pages of European paintings (B2) and enjoying myself greatly. As I turned the leaves I had the warm, happy feeling of everything being all right and of the sun shining on me that I used to have as a girl alone in a canoe writing poetry (B5), or that I sometimes have when I am with my sweetheart. In the book were lovely Madonna and child reproductions and I wanted to see especially the pictures I saw in Europe with mother before my life became so complicated. I remember at a summer resort taking mother out in a canoe to see a forest fire. The whole air was full of ashes, and ashes were falling on her dress. She was in black, in mourning for her sister. I think of *Gone With The Wind* (B5). I had the same feeling in the dream as when I say something here that I am afraid of and you are unconcerned about how dangerous it is for me. I awoke so hot I could not stay under the cover and had to go to urinate. It is almost as if I tried to set fire to my brother—I did—I always wanted to stir him up—like a gadfly. My mind goes from looking at the book in the dream and being beside mother as a child and looking at a picture book. I felt the world was all right and that there was sunshine falling on me as when I wrote poetry (B5) in the canoe when I was in my teens."

During the course of an interview a woman suddenly experienced marked difficulty in free-association and broke a silence of many minutes with "Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden (A7)." Upon being asked to associate to this idea she resisted and finally said, "I take a childish gleeful delight in ripping up knitted things and pulling something apart." Immediately after this the phrase "The militant and the meek" came to her mind (B1), and with it the idea of eagles and sheep. Then she remembered a dream of the night before which ventilated destructive impulses against her mother's child-bearing function.

Not infrequently, patients whose masturbation or perverse sexual activity expresses a violent destructive tendency which must be kept repressed state that the only imagery they are able to conjure up during masturbation consists of lines of poetry, a classical musical theme, or the words of a song belonging to another generation (B4). For example,

a woman patient sings to herself during masturbation the words of the first part of *The Lorelei*. When asked to free-associate to this idea, she recognised that the part of the song which she repeated refers to the Lorelei sitting and combing their golden hair. She recalled that her mother had unusually beautiful hair and skin and that in childhood she would sit and watch her comb her hair with great envy. "Now there goes through my mind 'Ich weis nit was es sol bedeuten.' Sometimes only after masturbation do I have the image of the Lorelei—I don't like to change the subject but this face of mine is getting me down. I'm noticing a lot of blackheads and red marks." Another patient reported that during masturbation he always thought of the line "Strong son of God, immortal Love" from *In Memoriam* (B4). As treatment progresses, these emergency experiences of the esthetic during and immediately after masturbation are replaced by masturbation phantasies in which the patient more and more represents himself participating in homosexual or heterosexual activity.

A patient quotes poetry about "the tie that binds," and then composes in the pattern of the ceiling an image of a girl with hands tied behind her back, "standing with her head like a suppliant." She then reports that she had masturbated the day before (A6).

"I see a body lying in a stream, being washed away. In regard to the course I am taking on the Renaissance, I think it should be pronounced and spelled renaissance. For some reason I think Edna St. Vincent Millay's *The Three Islands* is her best poem, and she does not know how she did it" (A7).

After marked blocking of her thought a woman tells that there comes to mind a poem her mother recited to her as a child—she recites it now, with discriminating appreciativeness, beginning with the words "Sweet violet, sweeter than all the roses." Upon completion, she is moved to confess what she had never told anyone before, her serious attempt at six years of age to drown her baby sister in a tub (A7).

A woman recites, "The world is so full of a number of things, I am sure we should all be as happy as kings," and then recalls having dreamed something last night. She reports having just now become aware that the dream concerned someone killing her sister with a dagger (B1).

A man reports two dreams of the same night: (1) A dream concerning malformed baby chicks, the later analysis of which revealed it to express in distorted form his destructive impulse to his mother's childbearing function



(to a younger brother); (2) "I went to the World's Fair where they had poetry recording booths. Heine had a friend who cut tails off of cats and dogs because he loved to hear them howl, but when he grew up he became one of the best surgeons in Germany" (B7).

A woman prefaces the telling of a dream of destroying her young brother by quoting with much feeling the first few stanzas of Poe's *The Raven*, and then describing at length how her brother had ruined her childhood with the nickname "Blackie" (B1).

A man tells: "I dreamed last night that I picked a scab off my finger and lo and behold I looked at it and it left a hole you could see into and it was hollow, and had rotted inside . . . this morning I went to the art store and bought my sister some pictures to put on her bare walls . . . she is heart-broken because she is sterile . . . I sent my brother my camera so he can take some good pictures of his baby" (B5).

Emergency-appreciating experience of the esthetic, exemplified by these quotations from the clinical material of non-artists, occurs rather frequently in a patient of the type I have described. He chooses particularly the realm of the esthetic as defense because it answers most efficiently his multiple unconscious needs in an emergency requiring defenses to supplement repression. The patient's passage into a contemplative mood, his transitory absorption in it, and the visible relief it affords are as significant as the fact that, unconsciously, his interest shifts particularly to the esthetic because it excels any other for liquidating at once, and most economically, the various tensions present. The psychoanalyst who is not particularly interested in esthetics does not ordinarily give careful attention to this type of defense, especially since Freud's writings about the problems of art offer him no direction which is on a scientific par with the rest of his writings; therefore, he will not be at pains to study the references to art in their dynamic context or to distinguish the contemplative kind of appreciating experience from the kind that I have differentiated as ideas with only casual reference to art. The psychoanalytic and psychiatric literatures contain clinical material in which many examples of the kind I

have quoted appear but their particular dynamic significance is unnoted. *Dream Analysis* by Sharpe is an exception in this regard. The following quotations are from it:

You will remember I spoke of a patient who awoke with a great feeling of pleasure and found herself saying: 'And give to airy nothings a local habitation and a name' [B5]. She remembered no actual dream for the latent dream thoughts had found in the preconscious mind the perfect vehicle in the form of a stored fragment of poetry. Free associations made to this fragment as if it had been a dream soon revealed the latent thoughts which brought effect of a less pleasurable kind.<sup>5</sup> . . . In this case the patient had had a considerable experience of analytic treatment. During this period psychical stress concerning aggression had most often been symbolized in her dreams by fierce angry seas. These usually were in pursuit of her, threatening to drown and overwhelm her. On the occasion of the dream to which I refer, when a father-surrogate figure had died, she dreamt that she was in deep water. The water however was so briny that it held her up and she knew that there was no fear of drowning. The association to 'salt water' was immediately 'salt tears' and then the next moment the patient quoted the lines: 'Let love clasp Grief, lest both be drowned' (B5). There is no menace to the ego in this psychical situation.<sup>6</sup>

The following part of a dream of destructiveness quoted from *The Metamorphosis of Dreams* by MacCurdy illustrates an interesting unnoted emergency experience of the esthetic:

Analysis revealed that the captain stood for his father, the dream, as a whole, representing his leaving home and using his father's money in activities, largely sexual, of which his father disapproved. The next day he was distinctly elated. He awoke amnesic for his dream, but with a picture in his mind of a painting of a Swedish artist representing two eagles sweeping regally over the surface of the sea [A7]. A few associations brought his dream to consciousness. He had been flying the night before in an aeroplane over the Western Front, dropping steel bolts on the German lines.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Ella Freeman Sharpe, *Dream Analysis*; New York, W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1939; p. 63.

<sup>6</sup> Reference footnote 5; pp. 175-6.

<sup>7</sup> John T. MacCurdy, *The Metamorphosis of Dreams. Problems of Personality: Studies in Honour of Morton Prince*; New York, Harcourt Brace and Co., 1925; pp. 363-364.

It is worthy of mention that emergency appreciating experience of the esthetic is employed as defense more often during the course of analyzing secondary hostilities and that they occur less frequently as treatment progresses to the analysis of primary hostility, that associated directly with the Oedipus complex.

#### THE CREATIVE ARTIST'S CONTEMPLATIVE (RE-CREATIVE) APPRECIATION OF ART

The conscious and unconscious mental processes that result in a need to appreciate art contemplatively can be observed with accuracy only when the "hunger" for experience of an object with esthetic meaning occurs in the course of free association according to the method of the psychoanalytic interview. When this experience occurs during the interview, however, its duration and intensity are less than when it occurs during the interval between interviews. The differences in the extent of this experience can best be understood by a comparison with what is observed psychoanalytically in creative artist-patients. The contemplative appreciating experience occurs in the creative artist on two types of occasions: (1) *In the interval between his depressions*, when it is frequently required to supplement the forces of repression in order to help equilibrate tensions almost as great as those which drive him into neurotic depressions; and (2) *in the course of healing himself from a depression*, when a period of compulsive need for extensive contemplative appreciation heralds the onset of inspiration. In this phase of the depressed artist's regressive self-healing, the first sparks of a return of live interest are directed into appreciation of a deeply spiritual kind. He enters this activity most frequently with a return of interest in the esthetic significance of his own genuinely creative past works, which it is usually the remarkable habit of the creative artist to withdraw interest from immediately upon their completion. His present orientation to these works recaptures a large measure of the same spiritual satisfaction that he enjoyed in their creation, and more than

he can gain from emergency contemplative appreciation of the same works when he is not depressed (type 1, above). Only for the creative artist, and only at this time, does Goethe's "To enjoy is to create anew" approximate the truth. The depressed artist will ruminate upon models or upon sketches made in the past, or he will direct his attention to masterpieces with the aim of apprehending their forms intuitively. With such acts of contemplation, which he always misconstrues as an intellectual or sensory pursuit, he begins his regression by that wooing of the Muse which flowers into inspiration and creation.

Contemplative appreciation in the depressed artist is similar in kind to contemplative appreciation in the creative artist when he is not depressed and in the non-artist only insofar as it also is a gesture addressed to the maternal side of conscience for the purpose of making some representation to it concerning the functioning of pity. Since it is called forth by a different kind of unconscious dynamic need, however, even this similarity is a very narrow one. In the depressed artist, guilty of having destroyed, contemplative appreciating is his elementary demonstration to conscience of restitutive and re-creative intentions, and signifies an attempt to restore the renounced function of pity. In the non-depressed creative artist and in the non-artist, guilty only of the threatened satisfaction of a repressed impulse to destroy, emergency contemplative appreciating demonstrates to conscience that pity is not really in danger of being renounced.

Contemplative appreciation by the depressed artist occurs to an extent that is re-creative because it must perform the extensive psychic tasks which initiate regression. It occurs only after he has submitted to considerable self-punishment over his guilt. It continues atonement and also introduces tokens of a genuine reform in accordance with the childhood dictates of his mother. This variety of appreciation is a deeper experience than the emergency variety of appreciation because it initiates the difficult, gradual, and protracted mental labor of



recreating whole, perfect, and animate, a destroyed or damaged object. It is also of greater duration because of the artist's mental condition then, which is one of hebetude, confusion, and melancholy. He is trying to feel his way out of the limbo of depression *by restoring the lapsed functions of pity and love* in ways certain to be acceptable to the maternal representative in conscience—by actual re-form.

On the other hand, for the non-artist who needs to appreciate art contemplatively during such emergencies as those described and for the non-depressed artist with the same needs during the interval between depressions, the appreciating experience is comparatively superficial and brief since their guilt and their unconscious need of an esthetic attitude of mind as defense are less. Besides, their ego functions have not been restricted as the result of a partial regression such as the depressed artist has suffered; they are not sluggish, confused, and depressed, but keyed-up, and confronted only with the need to extricate themselves quickly from an acute increase of anxiety by *demonstrating that the functions of pity and love are not being relaxed*. Thus relatively brief experiences of contemplative appreciation suffice to answer their relatively lesser need.

These comparisons between patients who are creative artists and those who are not and between the creative artist when he is depressed and when he is not depressed, in respect of their various contemplative modes of appreciating art, reveal that the psychological functions of their experiences are similar in kind only in a few particulars. Their experiences differ in duration and intensity according to the varying organizations of their mental institutions, the dissimilar dynamic contexts in which they occur, and their differing capacities for liquidating an emergency increase of the anxieties described.

It remains to comment that the presence of the psychoanalyst and the patient's transference of powerful feeling to him significantly qualify the depth of the emergency contemplative appreciation of art during an interview, where the pa-

tient attends to his mental processes with some self-consciousness and is disturbed with the need to report them to another person. Emergency contemplative appreciation during the interview is relatively brief, too, because the presence of the psychoanalyst not only permits the patient to deal ever more directly with his unreasonable destructive wishes which are urging themselves toward expression, but also permits him to verbalize immediately to a friendly personification of the maternal representative in his conscience his experience of esthetic meanings and his identification-in-common with the psychoanalyst in terms of these spiritually quickening values.

During the interval between interviews, however, an appreciating experience of this kind is accomplished privately in an uninterrupted absorption with the work of art, which mediates for the patient directly with his conscience. It occurs then as a more extensive and more leisurely experience than when his attention is divided between the work, his own mental processes, and the presence of a therapist whose transference significance facilitates this transaction with conscience. In privacy, its extent and the conditions under which it occurs are the same as are enjoyed by the "normal" esthetically sensitive appreciator when he feels moved to experience art intuitively.

The contemplative appreciation of art described by "normal" (i.e., presumably non-neurotic) esthetically sensitive persons bears close resemblance to the kind of experience observed as emergency defense during the psychoanalytic interview. In both of these, the experience is quite subjective and ineffable, relieves a state of tension, and affords a measure of spiritual satisfaction. The possibility that this intuitive mode of art appreciation also answers the same kind of emergency needs is suggested by the following features common to both: its unconscious and compulsive nature; its occurrence as the answer to a "hunger" for the esthetic, under conditions which cannot be controlled consciously; the inability to recapture at will the same kind and depth of experience, even with the same work of



art. Those capable of the experience are capable of it only occasionally, and are at these times "lost" in varying degrees of subjective identification with the work; and the experience yields a spiritual quality of pleasure, a feeling of inner unification, and a sense of enlargement of the personality. It is noteworthy, too, that the "normal" esthetically sensitive person is often fully aware that he is compelled to seek this kind of experience in art when he is troubled with conscious worries. These are the conscious cover for extensive unconscious anxieties which are rationalized as conscious worry, and which pass unrecognized as fatigue, ennui or tension from overwork. It is then that one feels moved "to escape into art." A certain kind of mental tension needs to find in the world outside an ideal type that will facilitate the restoration of inner at-one-ness.

I am aware that the comparisons I have presented do not comprise conclusive evidence of absolute identity between the esthetic states of the mind that occur in the neurotic and in the "normal." The most that we can say surely is that I have classified the varieties of artistic experience and have described the emotional contexts in dynamic relation to which, under specific conditions, the various creative and the various appreciating experiences of the esthetic occur in neurotic patients observed according to the psychoanalytic method. These findings have enabled me to observe and understand the same needs to defend oneself with esthetic experience when these occur in patients who are observed less intensively, as in psychiatric interviews where the finer dynamics of unconscious mental activity are obscured. Beyond this, I would add that supporting evidence for these findings exists in the testimonies of persons capable of an intuitive experience of art, and it is plain to read in the literature upon this subject written by nonscientific but esthetically sensitive persons. I would add also that my findings justify tentatively the assumption that contemplative experience of art by the "normal" as well as by the neurotic is founded in the same

unconscious needs; that is, that esthetic sensitivity is in general rooted in man's need for a state of mind that is the antithesis of his repressed, unreasonable wishes to destroy or damage.

Many who have a scholarly and professional interest in the arts, and whose attention and cooperation I earnestly solicit, will be shocked at the imputation that such primitive beasties could survive actively in the unconscious of the esthetically sensitive. They would prefer the traditional, but vague, classification of themselves as the "naturally sensitive." Some will quarrel, therefore, on one ground or another, with the right of this tentative assumption to be tested as a working basis for a truly, scientific theory of esthetics. I would ask them to consider whether this assumption does not deserve to have its validity, as well as its possible usefulness, tested alongside the ancient and sterile assumptions of philosophy that there is but one mental process, "the art impulse," to account for all creativeness in art, that there is but one mental process to account for both the creation and the appreciation of art in the normal and in the neurotic, that artistic beauty is the essence of art, that esthetic experience is evoked in us by a work of art, and that artistic beauty is at best only the pale reflection of the unearthly and unhuman Beauty which is God.

#### THE APPRECIATION OF ART IN THE RÔLES OF SPECTATOR AND OF CONTEMPLATOR

*De gustibus non est disputandum.* Not only do different persons react differently to the same work of art; the same person, before the same work of art, will react differently on different occasions. A work of art might engage our interest from such a variety of motives that it has been said to mirror the mind of the person who comes to it. In the rôle of spectator, one's interest in a work of art is practical, more or less casual, and consciously directed toward those aspects of the work that contain personal expressional values in terms of one's individual sensory, intellectual, emotional, and utilitarian interests. But these expressional values are

relatively superficial and consist chiefly in conscious associations to the subject matter; they are ulterior to the profound esthetic meanings of a creative work. In other words, a work of art can appeal to many needs which have little to do with an esthetic orientation of the mind.

Everyone can behave toward a work of art as a spectator. But only some spectators are capable of the unconscious orientation that demands and permits on some occasions a contemplative appreciation of the expressional spiritual values in art. The unconscious need for esthetic orientation requires two conditions: mental disposition and what I shall call contemplative alertness. I have already described the *mental disposition* of the patient who needs temporarily to become a contemplator, the organization of the institutions of his mind, and the special relationships which exist among them. By *contemplative alertness* I refer to the emergencies of acutely increased anxiety that occur in a person of this mental disposition on the occasions when he experiences difficulty in the repression of destructive rage and is seized with the need to defend himself against the resulting guilt and anxieties by orientation to the spiritual satisfactions contained in artistic experience. Contemplative alertness is the anxiety-driven "hunger" which compels the spectator to turn contemplator. When the task of liquidating the excess of anxieties is completed, his hunger for esthetic experience disappears, and with it for the time being his capacity for contemplative appreciation. The contemplator has now been returned to his ordinary capacity as a spectator and he is unable to recapture at will this occasional capability for contemplative experience, even of the same work.

The spectator directs his interest to the work of art as a means toward some ulterior end; for example, to enlarge his intellectual experience or prestige; to escape from boredom; to please a friend; to earn a living; to substitute for day-dreams; or to fill in a certain emptiness in his relation to time or space. He can indulge his wish to appreciate a work of art in the rôle of spectator as frequently

as he pleases. The spectator comes away from a dominantly conscious appreciation of art enriched chiefly by sensory pleasures, by whatever emotional satisfactions the work afforded his personal taste in subject matter, and by an expansion of his intellectual experience and his *amour propre*.

But when the spectator experiences a compelling need to turn contemplator, he is hungering for something beyond these. Unlike the spectator, his orientation to the work of art is chiefly a search for spiritual values. His interest seizes mainly its esthetic content, and his appreciating proceeds with a minimum of consciously directed effort. The contemplation of art is an act beyond willing—it is unconscious and compulsive in nature. The contemplator does not suffer "museum fatigue"; rather, he comes away from his experience refreshed with energy freed from the tasks of defense, enriched from the comprehension of its esthetic meanings and his renewed identification with them, and suffused with feelings of spiritual exaltation, at-one-ness, freedom, gratitude to the artist, and frequently with the resolve to become a better man.

From this description it will be seen that the mental processes of the contemplator of art resemble those that I have found to result in the creative activity of the artist. The contemplative appreciator of art and the artist who created it are close cousins in respect to personality make-up. Both are neurotic characters distinguished with marked narcissistic dispositions, and they enter into contemplative creation or contemplative appreciation of art as a means of relieving anxiety. Yet they differ as much as cousins do. The artist retains far more prominent fixations at the late anal-sadistic and late oral-sadistic stages of libidinal organization, has the more narcissistic character, and is less able to tolerate great increases of anxiety; thus his mental emergencies are generally more extreme because his destructive rage often results in tensions which are beyond containing by emergency contemplative appreciating alone, and he must then defend himself further by partial regression. The artist is the



less mature of the two, and he has the weaker ego since he must employ partial regression into a neurotic depression as the means of dealing with extraordinary increases of tension. During depression his re-creative mode of contemplative appreciating is one phase in a special cycle of reprogression whose various esthetic states of the mind express restitutive and creative intentions. His appreciating is but one of a series of steps in the self-cure of an illness. On the other hand, the person who needs to employ emergency contemplative appreciation seeks this experience as a first-aid, as a quick prophylactic measure when only the efficiency of repression is being overtaxed.

A creative work of art is versatile enough to give whatever we might demand of it at different times. In the rôle of spectator, we require only its surface values. In the rôle of contemplator, we require and plumb its spiritual intentions. Schopenhauer advises that "you must treat a work of art like a great man; stand before it and wait patiently till it deigns to speak." Rather, we must wait until we achieve the necessary tensions and the compulsion to equilibrate these with an esthetic state of mind.

#### TRANSITORY CREATIVENESS IN THE NON-ARTIST AND THE ARTIST

We hear now and then of someone who is not an artist but who, seemingly out of a clear sky, feels compelled to transform matter with enough esthetic meaning so that it constitutes for him an object of art. He is unschooled in the craftsmanship that is desirable, but not necessary, for expressing in matter the concepts born of creative imagination. Generally he has never before made as an end in itself an object with esthetic values, and he might never again feel compelled to do so. If he expresses his transitory episode of creativeness in the figurative arts, he uses any crude materials that are at hand. His product is never a masterpiece. Sometimes the art critic will say that it possesses conspicuous merit, but most often it excites only unfavorable criticism. For the maker and for the psychologist,

nonetheless, it is an original product of the creative imagination, called forth by and satisfying some unconsciously propelled impulse to create.

When we ask, Why, when, and how does it happen? we can turn again to clinical observation for instruction. Transitory creativeness sometimes occurs incidentally to psychoanalytic treatment, where it is ordinarily dismissed with the label "transitory sublimation" and with explanations based upon a speculative examination of the subject matter in terms of pre-genital sexual interest and the Oedipus complex. This overlooks the esthetic content of the art object—its formal values and their spiritual significance—which is the very essence of creativeness and distinguishes it from mere dream and fantasy.

In examining the instances where artistic creativeness has appeared as a transitory experience during psychoanalytic treatment, I have observed that it occurs only in those patients who have been dealing with exceptional quantities of the tensions which lead to the employment of emergency contemplative appreciating and who are finding even this emergency supplement to the ordinary means of defense insufficient to liquidate an unusual mass of anxiety. Transitory creativeness does not occur under conditions that require only the mustering in of this kind of appreciation as supplemental defense against tensions attendant upon the poor repression of a destructive impulse that is close to consciousness; *but it occurs when the unreasonable destructive impulse has been sufficiently activated to escape repression, and has been successfully visited upon the hated person in a verbal or physical attack or in a dream.* The considerable guilt aroused by this direct satisfaction of unreasonable rage is then repressed; and in the usual emergency need to contain the resulting massive quantities of anxiety, defense by a transitory creative experience of art is employed.

In the instances where a transitory episode of artistic creativeness is experienced upon awakening, it will be found to have occurred as a supplemental de-



fense to liquidate the great tensions resulting from a nightmare in which pity was relaxed and destructive rage was successfully vented. The more extensive transitory creative experience occurs sequel to those dreams in which the destruction was manifest enough to concern the presence of blood. Sometimes the dream of successful destructiveness is returned from repression only after the psychic work of creativeness has sufficiently reduced anxiety, being remembered hours or days later. When creativeness occurs in the interval between interviews, the patient will frequently report it without any recollection of having had a dream, but a dream of destructiveness will often emerge from repression during the course of free association. Its emergence into consciousness is sometimes facilitated by asking the patient to free-associate to what he has created or to the meanings of the created object or to the person for whom it was made or to details of its subject matter. In some patients the dream of successfully venting rage will not be remembered; instead a series of emergency contemplative appreciating experiences urge themselves into expression. If the patient is then asked to free-associate to one of these experiences, he will sometimes recall a dream of successful attack from the night before.

In women, transitory creativeness is observed more frequently in the period of heightened emotional irritability which is associated with the menstrual period. In their dreams of destructiveness, doubt is often introduced into the dream, or else into the free association to it, as to whether the blood observed in the dream had come from the destruction of someone or from the patient's menstrual flow.

To sum up, transitory creativeness occurs in the patient who usually rescues himself from the same kind of emergency by the contemplative appreciation of art, but who is now confronted with such acutely increased anxieties that the supplemental defense value of appreciation alone does not suffice. Here, transitory creativeness serves as the additional defense required by the more serious emergency; it resolves unconscious tensions

which are the same in kind as are liquidated by the emergency contemplative appreciation but which are much greater since they result from the frank expression of a poorly repressed impulse to destroy or damage.

In the situation just described, creativeness follows upon contemplative appreciation, as in the depressed artist. But this does not mean that these two situations are the same either in kind or in degree except in a quite limited sense. Their similarity lies in their common unconscious need to appease conscience and in their common procedure of suing the maternal representative in conscience for a return of its love and approval by creating an esthetic object which signifies atonement, reform, and the restoration of pity and love. The extent of their dissimilarity is also impressive, and is equally important for us to consider.

In the partially regressed, depressed artist a large amount of guilt and anxiety has been present for days or weeks, and has been reduced by self-punishment to the point where reprogression can begin with that mode of contemplative appreciating which is re-creative in depth. Here, appreciation is a psychic labor in which accumulating re-creative intentions successfully pave the way for inspiration and creation, which then occur as the reprogressive steps of an advancing creative mood. Transitory creativeness, on the other hand, occurs where there is no regression, where guilt must be dealt with quickly and at once; here, the creativeness occurs when, in an acute emergency, a contemplative appreciation which is not of a re-creative depth, and whose significance is that of reassuring conscience that all is well with pity and that destructiveness remains repressed, proves insufficient to the emergency needs of liquidating anxieties which are mounting in the face of a failing repression. This mode of creativeness occurs rapidly, in order to relieve a small panic and help prevent the need of defense by partial regression; it is, therefore, a necessarily brief experience. In the depressed artist, creativeness extends over a longer period because it occurs in a per-

sonality that is then partially regressed and is engaged in the considerable psychic tasks of reprogression.

It can be said, then, of the depressed artist in the phase of his creativeness and of the non-artist and the non-depressed artist when they need to employ transitory creativeness that their unconscious needs are similar to the extent that they consist of tensions of the same kind, sequel to the successful expression of an unreasonable repressed wish to destroy another. But these occur in quite dissimilar states of personality disorganization and present quite dissimilar imperative needs for defense by esthetic states of the mind which are creative.

In the depressed creative artist, the restitutive and redemptive psychic labors comprised in contemplative re-creative appreciation, inspiration, and creation are much deeper and proceed more slowly since the wound of discord to be healed here is more extensive, less acute, and already limited from extending further; whereas the wound which conscience visits on the mind of one who needs merely to employ transitory creativeness to relieve an emergency is a fresh and still relatively slight wound, but one that threatens to extend unless it can be healed speedily with the balm of creativeness.

The creative artist, when he is sufficiently destructive, pays a much higher price for his guilt by suffering partial regression into a neurotic depression—a more serious illness, and one enduring for days or weeks. We who appreciate the creative artist's work contemplatively profit not only from the extended depth and duration of his depression, but also from the intermittent character of his recovery. This intermittence in the psychic labors of restitution and of suing for redemption enables inspiration to conceive more profound esthetic meanings, and creation to embody them with more extensive formal organization. We profit, too, from the many minor inspirations which occur throughout the more protracted activity of his creating and from their creative exploitation in the mastery of technical difficulties. It is not his

learned technical knowledge or his acquired craftsmanship or his acquaintance with the lore of art that we judge to be incomparably better as art than the product of transitory creativeness. Rather, his more extensive psychic needs during depression require, and his technical knowledge and experience permit, the undertaking of a work whose conception and creation are more deliberate and more elaborate than those required by the less extensive esthetic state of mind whose needs are efficiently met with defense by transitory creative experience and whose product is, therefore, of comparatively superficial esthetic significance.

The product of transitory creativeness rarely merits being called a work of marked esthetic significance by an impartial judge; often, too, it reveals unconscious plagiarism, both in subject matter, and in form. Yet, considered for its significance to the patient's mental health, both the patient who created it and the therapist who has understood its inner meanings for him from having observed his creative mental processes *in statu nascendi* would agree with the ultimate authority on the matter. This authority is his conscience. It is the esthetic judgment of conscience that, considering all the circumstances, his creation embodies sufficient testimony of reform to be a means of grace. And it is this that gives the created object esthetic merit in the judgment of the patient; for him it has fulfilled the important psychological functions of relieving pain, securing rematriation, and restoring inner harmony.

The artist who produces the best of the works we judge as "counterfeit" of the creative most often produces in order to secure a superficial spiritual satisfaction, which I shall describe presently. He is occasionally capable of emergency contemplative appreciating experience and is sometimes capable of episodes of transitory creativeness. In transitory creativeness, his technical knowledge and experience permit him to exploit his creative need in ways impossible for the non-artist. Because he enjoys somewhat better mental health than the creative artist, he is



not called upon to regress and to experience neurotic depressions; consequently he is not required by inner necessity to woo the Muse with the creative artist's contemplative (re-creative) appreciation of art, to experience the pleasure and the pain of inspiration, or to create works of art.

#### THE APPRECIATION OR PRODUCTION OF ART FOR A SUPERFICIAL SPIRITUAL SATISFACTION

The impulse to destroy is repressed to some degree in the unconscious part of the minds of all of us. A large share of the training of every infant and child and adolescent should teach him how to master in other ways than by repression the unreasonable hostile impulses it is natural for him to develop. If he is wisely or fortunately educated toward maturity, he masters this hatred ultimately by acquiring more and more of an outweighing love for people. Until then, he copies the examples of those who exercise an inner check against their hatreds, divert their expression of them from human to inanimate objects, and transmute them into play and sport. He learns also to judge his jealousies, envies, and other hatreds for their unreasonableness in motive and degree, to exercise the functions of pity, and to exchange self-love more and more for love of others. The effectiveness of this education toward maturity, which, before Freud, appeared to be mostly an intellectual and logical matter, depends largely upon an emotional factor: the year-by-year successes of the child in learning to love others in ways mature for his age. His success in loving maturely at any period in his development hangs almost entirely on the love of his parents for each other. If his parents love each other in ways befittingly mature for their own ages, the child is from the beginning of life fortunately endowed with healthy teachers. Thus the richest inheritance the child can have is emotionally healthy parents who are in love with each other.

The failure of a child to love maturely for his age and to master hatred by pro-

gressively healthier techniques than destructive rage or excessive repression invariably results in some degree of neurosis. When he reaches puberty, he fails in the test of channeling large quantities of sexual energy with relative ease into a design for loving and for mastering hatred, a design the mature patterns of which he should have sketched in with increasing self-reliance as infancy matured into childhood and childhood into a happy adolescence. The adolescent who fails this test is one who has been overtaken by a physical maturity for which he is ill-prepared emotionally. Consequently his adolescence is stormy and unhappy; that is, neurotic. The later history of his neurosis depends largely on external factors and his physical health. It may exist in masked form; or it may become manifest in abnormal character traits, disabling psychic and psychosomatic symptoms, and sexual misidentification. Or it may eventuate in a frank "nervous break-down" when he fails to pass other of life's tests. These tests concern his capacity for happy relationships with himself and with friends of both sexes, including his parents, his mate, and his children; and they concern also his ability to adjust satisfactorily to sundry unearned misfortunes with which life confronts everyone. Many who are unable to pass these tests move from their first childhood into their second childhood without ever having matured emotionally, without having claimed their potentialities for full happiness.

Persons who are able to approximate their mature capacities for the happiness which accompanies inner security and a mature love of others will not be much troubled by whatever residue of unreasonable hatred they still harbor in repression, conduct into play and sport, give vent to in humor, or transmute into valuable character traits and the function of pity. There are, however, many persons who are not so fortunate; and who are not yet so unfortunate as to express their neuroses in gross social maladjustments or to require escape from the pain of their failure into chronic alcoholism, "nervous



break-down," drug addiction, mysticism or suicide. This in-between group comprises a large share of the population, who suffer neurotic tendencies which subtract less from their happiness than they can manage to overlook, to rationalize, or to drain into a psychosomatic illness and character eccentricities. It contains all of our gifted people, many "charming" (interesting because neurotic) persons, and "some of our best friends." To sum up: a large percentage of the population suffers from masked neuroses resulting from inability to love maturely and characterized by the presence of too much hatred which must be kept repressed.

Repressed hate-ful impulses to destroy or to damage another person are excited in the neurotic individual when his unreasonable, unconsciously propelled needs and demands are thwarted. If he visits his rage upon someone in fancy, in a verbal attack, in a physical attack, or in sexual activity that has the unconscious significance of hate and degradation of the partner, he feels guilty and fears discovery, retaliation, and the loss of the love of those who would condemn this behavior. The tensions resulting from guilt over the impulse to destroy or to damage are usually too painful to be tolerated in consciousness very long, and are repressed. But in the unconscious part of the mind they are only out of sight; they continue active, striving to reenter consciousness. One distorted form in which they commonly manifest themselves in our conscious thinking is as *feelings of disorder and "messiness,"* feelings which are now entirely disassociated in consciousness from their cause, guilt over the impulse to destroy or damage.

The unconsciously guilty person accepts his inner sense of messiness and disorder as if it had full basis in reality, and then engages in compulsive behavior which is logically sequential to his conscious false premise. He behaves as if he were actually dirty and disorderly, instead of figuratively so. He needs to misconstrue in this way an unconscious need of punishment over destructiveness because it is much less painful for consciousness to tolerate a distorted and symbolic

expression of guilt and because the acknowledgment of guilt in this symbolic form renders it simpler for him to deal with it concretely and quickly. His general plan is to divest himself of bodily dirt, instead of "dirty motives."

On occasions when guilt is aroused, it is often expressed in self-punishing dreams of one's person, clothes, or belongings being filthy. On these occasions, too, one finds oneself taking unnecessary baths or bathing too scrupulously; just now, shoes must be shined, nails or hair or teeth cleaned, blackheads expressed, unnecessary enemas and cathartics employed, and perfumed products used extravagantly. The sense of disorder expresses itself also in self-punishing dreams of one's furniture being topsy-turvy or of one's clothes being awry and most inappropriately matched. One initiates behavior to eradicate disorder in one's property and physical surroundings. Just now, furniture, clothes closets, drawers, and files must be rearranged and cleaned, clothes sent for cleaning and pressing, the check-book balanced, the barber or beauty-shop visited, one's automobile put into superb order and shining cleanliness, or one's best clothes worn in an ensemble of conspicuously good taste. The sense of disorder that is referred to one's social life expresses itself in self-punishing dreams and quite unreasonable conscious fears of being deserted by others. So relationships to others must be put in order. Just now, and in a hurry, one pays his overdue bills, answers an accumulation of letters, visits poor relatives and repays neglected social calls, makes a will, or entertains friends with the most correct and lavish hospitality.

In short, guilt is sensed consciously as messiness and disorder, and these are transcended compulsively with a conspicuous interest in external cleanliness and orderliness in regard to one's body, property, and social relationships. This sweeping of one's guilt under the rug and then scrupulously cleaning and smoothing out the top of the rug yield some relief of the guilt and much increase in self-regard.

Now, I hold, on the basis of extensive clinical material, that there is also a mode of art appreciation that we seek when occasionally we are visited by the guilt-driven unconscious need for order and cleanliness. This is not surprising, since culture demands cleanliness and order of us and since a temporary compulsive need for overscrupulous external cleanliness and order can be achieved most effectively from a surface participation in art, upon whose shining cleanliness and integral orderliness culture bestows very high value. Under these circumstances, when our relatively superficial degree of guilt can be contained by the gratification of this correspondingly superficial esthetic need, we unwittingly seek the appreciation of art because it offers us easily obtained and culturally valued identifications with an exquisite degree of order and cleanliness. I shall, therefore, call this kind of enjoyment of art *the appreciation of art for a comparatively superficial spiritual satisfaction*. It is relatively superficial because the appreciator need not plumb the work of art further than its surface values of exquisite orderliness and cleanliness for the peace these lend him against the sense of disorderliness and messiness which masks his unconscious guilt and for the increase in self-regard which results from sharing the craftsman's pride in his clean and orderly skill.

We should not, however, be led into the esthete's depreciation of this comparatively superficial experience with art. From the viewpoints of culture and mental hygiene, it fulfils a most impressive function in our lives. More people are more frequently capable of it than of any other variety of artistic appreciation. It often constitutes the leading unconscious motive for personally satisfying and socially valuable occupations and it affords an easily available benefit for our minds in the troubled circumstances described, in which all sometimes find themselves. Thousands who have a fairly frequent strong inner need for this comparatively superficial satisfaction from art, but who lack the contemplative spark for creativeness, enroll yearly in art schools. They

become excellent craftsmen, but not creative artists, since art schools cannot teach creativeness. They produce art, but are unable to create. Unlike the creative artist's mental effort, which is mostly unconscious and intuitive, their mental labor in producing is quite consciously directed. Their products exploit novelty, technical brilliance, and arresting subject matter to compensate for the absence of esthetic content. Yet they produce painting, music, dance, literature, sculpture, and architecture which interest and delight us with their unique sense of order and cleanliness. These works offer a certain esthetic value to the mind of the appreciator whose esthetic needs are similarly superficial.

To repeat that they are sufficient to the need of our frequent superficial esthetic orientation of mind is by no means to undervalue their importance to culture and to our personal mental housekeeping. We find very frequent and extensive enjoyment in art products of this kind. They greet us everywhere as decoration, ornament, architecture, and entertainment. Ordinarily they help to rest and refresh our minds; but when our unconscious guilt weighs us down and we are faced consciously with only a sense of messiness and disorder, we can seek them out and pay them special attention in order to borrow what we need. The competent playing of musical instruments, orchestral direction, dramatic interpretation, and ballet dancing; most of the painting, commercial art, sculpture, literature, and architecture, jewelry, furniture, and rugs, made by artists who are productive but who are not capable of creativeness and also made by creative artists in the periods when they are not depressed; most of the best of all these artistic efforts are produced from the fairly frequent need, in the producer or the performer, of defense with a comparatively superficial esthetic state of mind that can be answered by the technically skillful production of something with a unique sense of orderliness and cleanliness. But they cannot offer to the same maker or appreciator, when he is occasionally capable of contemplative experience, the deep spiri-



tual meanings which are contained in creative works of art. In the creative work of art one can find any variety of appreciating that his particular esthetic state of mind may demand, according to the various needs to defend himself at different times with different esthetic orientations of the mind: the superficial experience of its qualities of order and cleanliness; the emergency contemplative experience of its esthetic meaning; or the re-creative, contemplative experience of its esthetic content.

True virtuosity in the interpretation and the critical appreciation of a work of art occurs only occasionally, and it results from an esthetic orientation of mind which requires a contemplative mode of appreciating that recreates the creator's esthetic content in one's own idiom. True virtuosity in these professional activities does not aim at entertaining us, at edifying us, or at lending us a unique sense of order and cleanliness, but at gaining primarily for the interpreter himself or for the critic himself, and only at such times as he is oriented to the art with an anxiety-driven esthetic state of mind, a contemplative absorption into the work which animates him and the work with a sense of life. As critics and interpretative artists can testify, this re-creative mode of interpretation and criticism visits them rarely enough.

#### SUMMARY

There are various modes of appreciating art, all of which may be called forth by differing esthetic states of the mind at different times in the same appreciator and in relation to the same work of art. The esthetic states of the mind which are resolved by art appreciation group themselves into five classes:

*Appreciation A:* The casual and mainly intellectual interest from chiefly conscious and ulterior motives, which often include a prominent unconscious need to enlarge self-esteem with this culturally valued activity.

*Appreciation B:* A superficial spiritual experience of esthetic meanings, required by a moderate amount of guilt over repressed destructive impulses and presenting itself con-

sciously as a sense of messiness and disorder which then borrows from the appreciation of art chiefly an antithetical sense of exquisite order, cleanliness, and moral superiority.

*Appreciation C:* A deeper and contemplative mode of appreciating esthetic meanings more significant than those of a mere antithetical orderliness and cleanliness, which comprehends in addition some of the restitutive and creative intentions in a work of art. This esthetic state of the mind functions as a quick first-aid for the relief of an emergency consisting in the acute increase of specific kinds of anxieties. It denies that the function of pity stands in danger of being relaxed.

*Appreciation D:* The deeply contemplative, and truly re-creative appreciating, of which only the creative artist is capable and only at certain times, that is, during one phase in healing himself of a neurotic depression. In comprehending most extensively the restitutive and creative intentions of a work of art, this esthetic state of the mind initiates the repressive self-healing of his depression. It is the first step in restoring the function of pity.

*Appreciation E:* The contemplative mode of appreciating art which the interpretative artist and the critic may at times achieve, and which results from a need for defense which is similar to that answered by Appreciations C and D.

The various kinds of artistic products, in regard to their significance to the maker's esthetic state of mind, group themselves into three classes according to the mental processes which are concerned in each variety of making:

*Making 1:* The mostly unconscious and compulsive making of a work of art by the creative artist, as the final step in his self-healing of a neurotic depression. It follows upon Appreciation D and inspiration.

*Making 2:* The mostly unconscious, compulsive, and transitory creativeness resulting in an artistic product which, compared with Making 1, is of relatively superficial esthetic significance. It is called forth by a different kind of esthetic state of the mind than is Making 1, and in answer to relatively less extensive needs for defense with an esthetic orientation. It occurs frequently in the creative artist during the interval between depressions, rarely in the non-artist, and fairly frequently in the so-called "counterfeit" artist. The product often contains considerable elements of unconscious plagiarism.

*Making 3:* The consciously directed making of an artistic product, technically well done, but of superficial esthetic significance, as answer to the need of defense by making something with an exquisite antithetical sense of order and cleanliness. These products are often technically brilliant, useful, and decorative, and are sometimes referred to in the literature with the badly chosen term "counterfeit art."

The dynamic relationships between these classes of appreciation, and between appreciating and making, may be considered further in terms of whether the destructive rage leading to defense by an esthetic state of mind is successfully repressed:

*Where destructive impulses are well repressed and other motives lead one's interest to art: Appreciation A* occurs from motives ulterior to the appreciation of esthetic content.

*When the expression of rage results in the repression of considerable guilt: Appreciation B or Making 3* occurs when a moderate amount of guilt over destructive rage is repressed. When a patient of the special character type described represses such a large amount of guilt that the employment of *Appreciations A and B* cannot alone contain the increased tensions and the efficiency of repression is taxed, *Appreciation C* is mustered in to supplement repression and liquidate the acute excesses of anxiety.

*When the expression of rage results in a small panic which is successfully and quickly liquidated by various esthetic states of the mind:* In a person of the special character type described, when destructive rage escapes from repression and is successfully expressed in waking life or in a dream, the guilt and anxiety are great enough to call forth vigorous attempts at defense with *Appreciation B*, which proves insufficient and is then supplemented additionally with emergency defense by *Appreciation C*. If even these defenses are insufficient to contain the mounting anxieties, then *Making 2* is mustered in to supplement the defense further.

*When the expression of rage results in a small panic which these esthetic states of the mind fail to liquidate and which then requires defense by partial regression:* When a person with a mental organization we know as that of the creative artist expresses successfully, in conscious fancy or behavior, the destructive rage of which he is capable, he suffers a partial regression in order to defend himself against anxieties so great that repression and its supplemental defenses are insufficient to contain them, and they threaten to overwhelm him. His partial regression manifests itself as a neurotic depression, from which he heals himself eventually with a cycle of repressive steps, among which re-creative and contemplative *Appreciation D*, inspiration, and creative *Making 1* are successive phases.

#### CONCLUSIONS

An esthetic orientation of the mind is the precondition for the making and for the appreciating of art. The assumptions that artistic activity is evoked by external "beauty," or that it results from a native "art impulse," are not correct.

An esthetic state of the mind occurs as the unconsciously compelled need to achieve an esthetic synthesis among the institutions of the mind, and between it and the outside world, when ordinary integration is disturbed by destructive rage under the several conditions described. Artistic experience is sought when an esthetic orientation of the mind requires it for its synthetic capacity in healing the distress which has resulted from a relaxation of the function of pity, and in restoring this function. The assumptions that artistic experience results from an overflow of superfluous energy, or merely from the sublimation of sexual energy, are not correct.

There are various esthetic states of the mind which lead to the varieties of making art and the varieties of appreciating art. Each esthetic state of the mind results from a mental process unique to it, and each is dissolved by the particular artistic activity which it initiates. All of these differing esthetic states of the mind



may occur in the same person and before the same work of art at different times. The assumption that the same esthetic state of the mind occurs in all makings and appreciations—that there is one mental process leading to all makings and

that these vary only in degree, and that the same mental process leads to all appreciations and that these vary only in degree—is incorrect.

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Lee, Harry B.

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ON THE ESTHETIC STATES OF THE  
MIND. August, 1947.

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